

# Intimate Landscapes



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIOT PORTER

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ELIOT PORTER

With an Afterword by  
Weston J. Naef

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART • NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON



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*Cover: Redbud trees in bottomland. Near Red River Gorge, Kentucky. April 17, 1968*

# Contents

9	FOREWORD	<i>Philippe de Montebello</i>
11	PREFACE	<i>Eliot Porter</i>
13	PLATES	
126	AFTERWORD	<i>Weston J. Naef</i>
135	CHRONOLOGY	
142	LIST OF PLATES	



# Foreword

INTIMATE LANDSCAPES, an exhibition of fifty-five color photographs by Eliot Porter, is the first one-man exhibition of color photographs ever presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Works by Eliot Porter entered the Museum's collection as far back as 1949, when Georgia O'Keeffe presented from the Estate of Alfred Stieglitz an important collection of photographs assembled by Stieglitz himself. This collection included three early black and white prints by Eliot Porter, one of which is reproduced in this catalogue.

All the photographs in the present exhibition brilliantly reflect the standards of excellence that are Eliot Porter's greatest contribution to the field of color photography. Upon seeing these photographs, the viewer is immediately struck by the artist's distinctly individual and intimate interpretation of the natural world.

This exhibition was made possible through funds donated by David Hunter McAlpin, whose imaginative and active support of the Museum's photography collection deserves special recognition. Weston J. Naef, Associate Curator of Prints and Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, was responsible for the shaping and organization of the show. Its realization would not have been possible without the generous cooperation of Mr. Porter; his wife, Aline Porter; John Macrae III, president of E. P. Dutton; Eleanor Caponigro, who was responsible for the design of this book; and Nancy Barrett, from whose bibliography—compiled from Mr. Porter's personal files and her own research—the chronology was drawn. Other members of the Museum's staff who deserve recognition and thanks for making the catalogue and exhibition possible are Townsend Blodget, Publications Associate, and Colta Ives, Curator in Charge, Department of Prints and Photographs.

PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO  
*Director*  
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*





# Preface

THOUGH IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED that abstract art refers to those works inspired by the imagination of the artist rather than by objective reality, in photography, in which images are produced by the lens, this distinction is difficult to sustain. In the broadest sense of the term, an optical image is an abstraction from the natural world—a selected and isolated fragment of what stands before the camera. When the selected image is self-explanatory and does not imply more than what lies within its area it is usually referred to as abstract, that is, independent of its surroundings—a pattern of rock, for example, or lichens, or grasses. On the other hand, in the wider scenic view common in most landscape photography, the selected image implies a world outside the limits encompassed by the lens.

Photography of nature tends to be either centripetal or centrifugal. In the former, all elements of the picture converge toward a central point of interest to which the eye is repeatedly drawn. The centrifugal photograph is a more lively composition, like a sunburst, in which the eye is led to the corners and edges of the picture: the observer is thereby forced to consider what the photographer excluded in his selection.

I do not photograph for ulterior purposes. I photograph for the thing *itself*—for the photograph—without consideration of how it may be used. Some critics suggest that I make photographs primarily to promote conservation, but this allegation is far from the truth. Although my photographs may be used in this way, it is incidental to my original motive for making them, which is first of all for personal aesthetic satisfaction.

The natural world has always attracted my eye: associations of living and inanimate phenomena, from the tropics to the poles and from rain forests to deserts, have been favorite photographic subjects for almost half a century. Grasses and sedges, especially, appeal to me—an appeal like disordered hair across a face, or a windblown field of hay before the mowing. When associated with water, as sedges so often are, the magic of restlessness is enhanced by reflections not foreseen. In mixed woods of pine and maple, the needles of the pines drop throughout the year, building jackstraw mats of thin brown bundles on which, at the time of the fall of the leaf, the bright maple leaves settle at random, arranging themselves in harmonious patterns that defy improvement as though placed there intentionally.

In northwest New Mexico and southeast Utah, the desert landscape is dominated by eroded black and gray mounds of bentonite clay, that suggest the wrinkled backs of sea monsters. The gullies between the mounds are paved with jasper pebbles brought down by infrequent rains; on their reticulated sides, fragments of metamorphic and igneous rocks are enhanced by brightly colored lichens, that have found on them a place to perpetuate their kind.

Coyote Gulch is a tributary to the Escalante River, which in turn flows into the Colorado River's Glen Canyon (now Lake Powell). The side canyons of the Colorado River were sliced into the cross-bedded Navajo sandstones of the Utah Plateau during the period that accompanied the retreat of the last ice sheet. Because of the immense amount of water flowing off the land during this pluvial period, erosion of the friable sandstone produced perpendicular-sided, slotlike canyons that slowly began to widen. This process continues today, in miniature, on the floor of Coyote Gulch where small streams loaded with abrasive sand flow over bare rock. Vertical grooves are scooped out by the same process of water abrasion that created, on a far vaster scale, the magnificent canyons of the Colorado during the last glacial epoch.

Rocks by themselves without the conjunction of any visible living things are frequently found in fascinating shapes and colors. The details of geological formations exhibit the most extraordinary combination of shapes and colors, scarcely suspected on casual observation. The banding of glacial striations

and the haphazard occurrence of fractures can be discovered in harmonious arrangements that seem to defy the chance working of natural forces. Likewise, the exudates of the earth's interior, black, nonreflective lavas that become, when viewed from a particular angle, mirrorlike and iridescent, or the foamy masses of volcanic scoria of indescribable complexity, are in detail irresistibly abstract. But it is the colors of these inanimate subjects that are their most engaging characteristics. The colors are either intrinsic, or, like the iridescence of the hummingbird's plumage, a phenomenon of light itself, of reflection and interference. The condition that geologists call desert varnish—an oxide coating on a smooth rock surface long exposed to sun and weather—when viewed from certain directions is mat black, but when seen in shade, illuminated solely by the light of a cloudless sky, it reflects the most astonishing brilliant blue. A film of water on a rock surface does the same thing. It may reflect the light of the sky after absorbing the longer wavelengths and be as blue as the surface of the sea, or it might reflect the color of a sunlit sandstone cliff and become a band of gold.

Ultimately, to be successful as a work of art, a photograph must be both pleasing and convincing. It must not leave the viewer in doubt about the validity of its subject, whether representational or imaginary. Every part must contribute to the unity of the image from corner to corner—no discordant note should be permitted.

ELIOT PORTER

*Great Spruce Head Island, Maine*

*July 1979*

# Intimate Landscapes



[Plate 1]

*Foxtail grass. Lake City, Colorado. August 1957*



[Plate 2]

*Maple leaves and pine needles. Tamworth, New Hampshire. October 3, 1956*







[Plate 3]

*Raspberry leaves and grass. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. July 7, 1964*



[Plate 4]

*Blackberry bushes. Adirondack Park, New York. September 30, 1963*







[Plate 5]

*Red-spined cactus and lichen-covered branches. Near El Aguajito, Baja California. March 31, 1964*



[Plate 6]

*Dogwood berries off Foothills Parkway. Near Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. October 15, 1967*





[Plate 7]

*Long-stemmed grasses. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. August 1, 1973*





[Plate 8]

*Columbine leaves. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. July 27, 1974*







[Plate 9]

*Asters and raspberries. Oak Island, Maine. August 26, 1973*



[Plate 10]

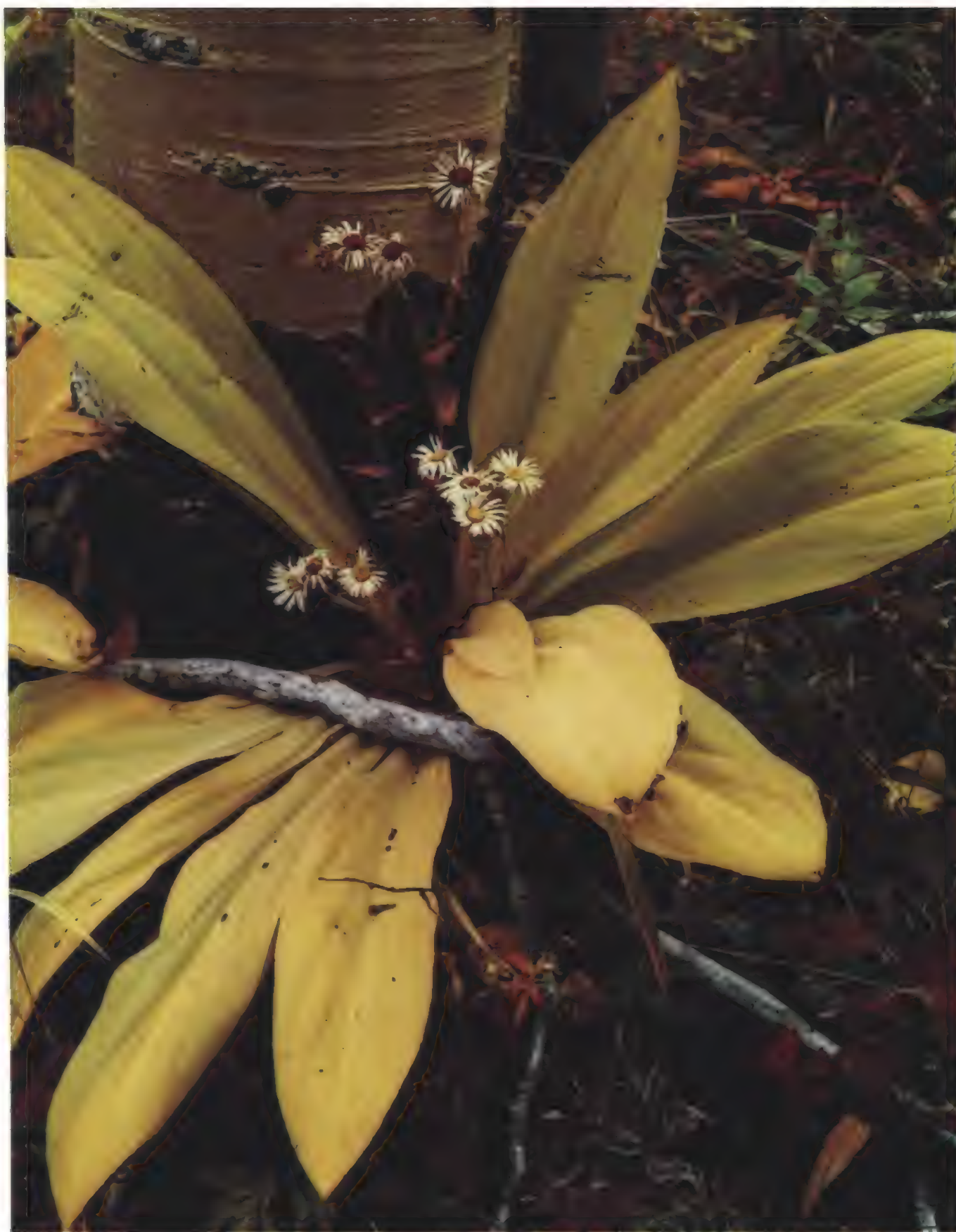
*Hepaticas. Near Sheffield, Massachusetts. April 17, 1957*





[Plate 11]

*Aspen, yellow leaves, and asters. Sangre de Cristo Mountains, New Mexico. September 20, 1950*



[Plate 12]

*Trunks of maple and birch with oak leaves. Passaconaway Road, New Hampshire. October 7, 1956*







[Plate 13]

*Red tree. Near Cade's Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. October 7, 1967*



[Plate 14]

*Red osier. Near Great Barrington, Massachusetts. April 18, 1957*



[Plate 15]

*Trees and pond. Near Sherborn, Massachusetts. April 1957*

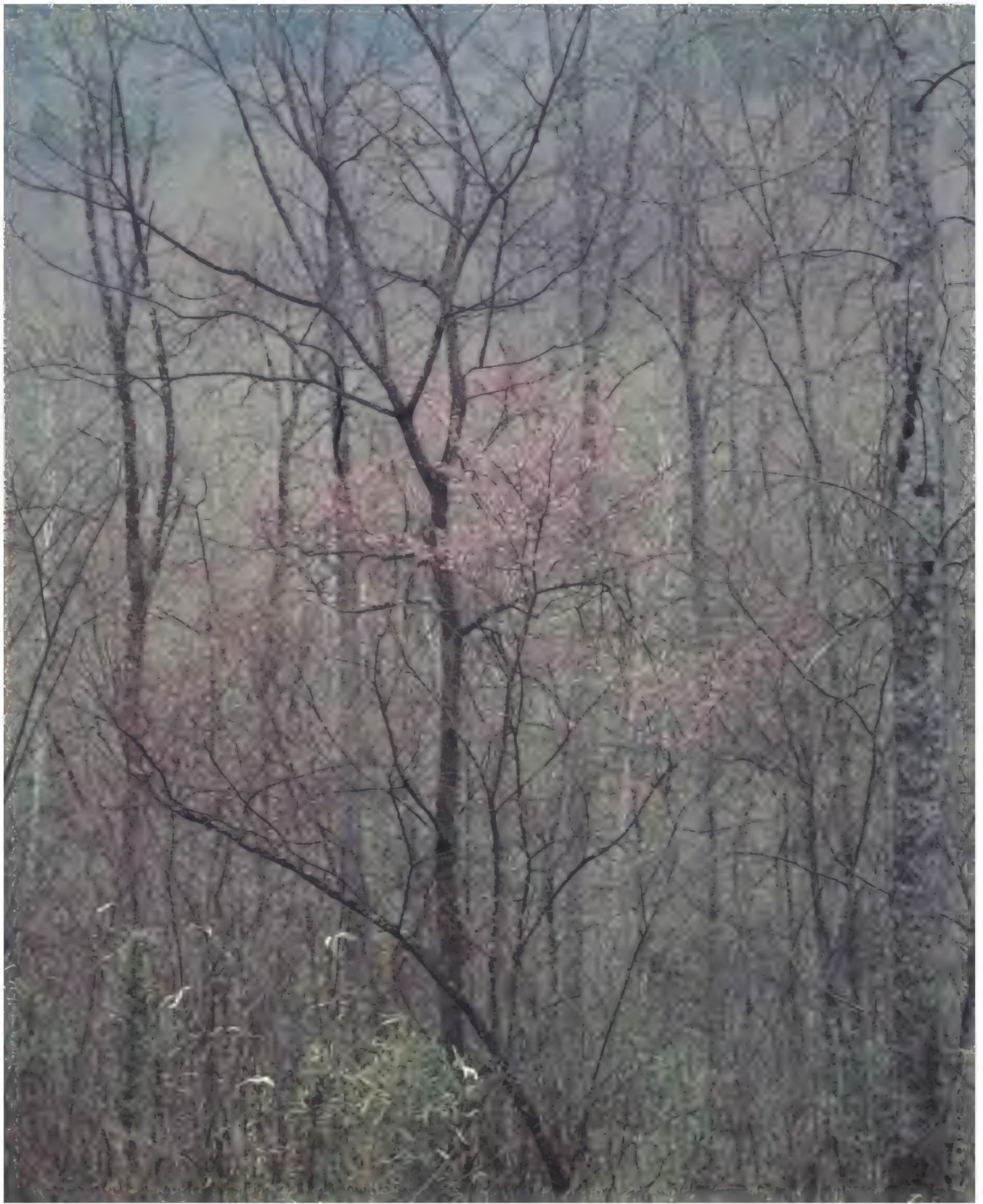




[Plate 16]

*Redbud trees in bottomland. Near Red River Gorge, Kentucky. April 17, 1968*

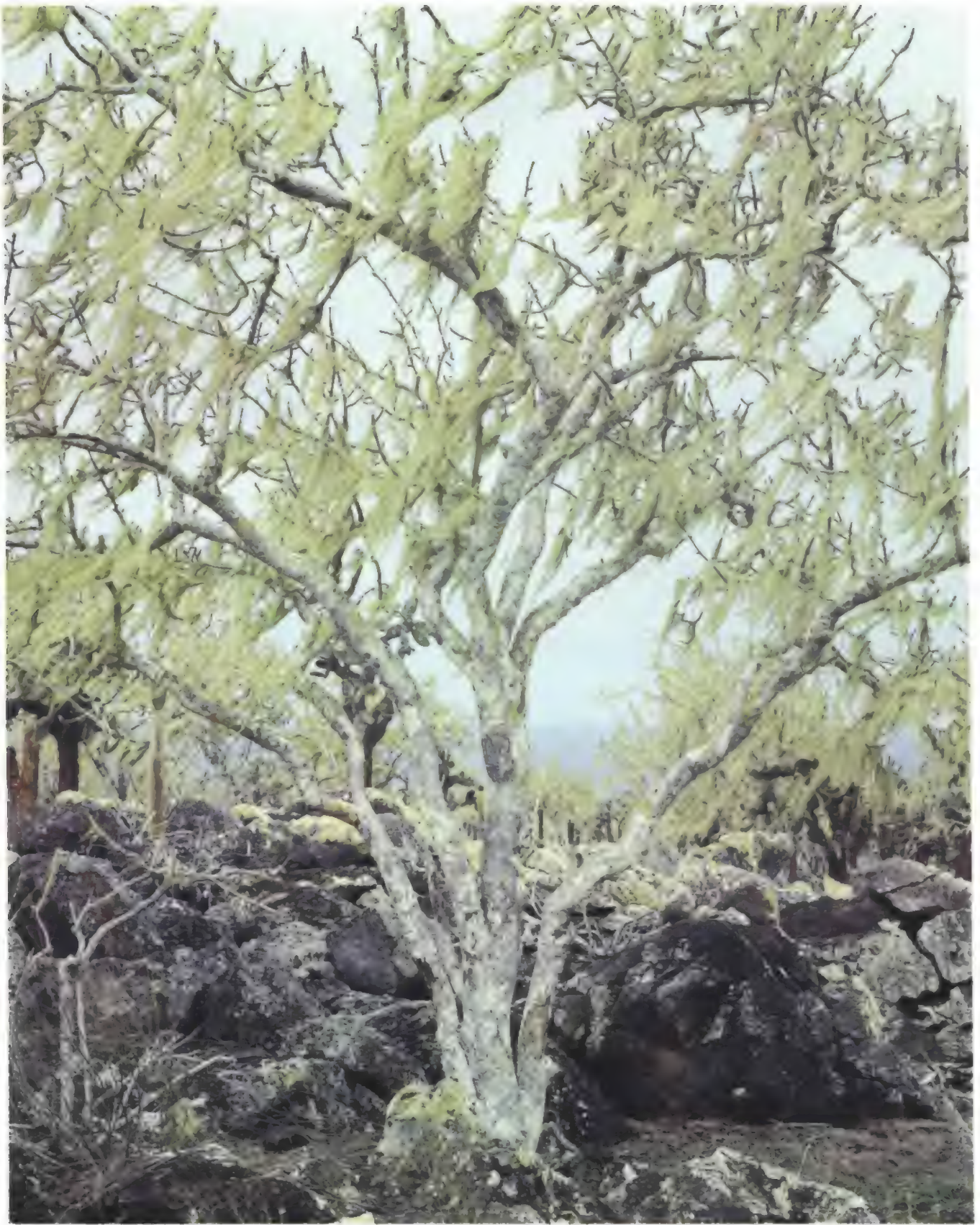




[Plate 17]

*Lichens on palo santo tree. Barrington Island, Galápagos Islands. May 21, 1966*





[Plate 18]

*Rock spires and spruce trees. Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah. June 20, 1975*







[Plate 19]

*Elephant tree in bloom. Near El Mármol, Baja California. July 28, 1966*



[Plate 20]

*Trunks of the paloverde tree. Tucson Mountain Park, Arizona. May 16, 1958*







[Plate 21]

*Davis Gulch. Escalante River near Glen Canyon, Utah. August 25, 1964*



[Plate 22]

*Pool in a brook. Pond Brook, near Whiteface, New Hampshire. October 1953*





[Plate 23]

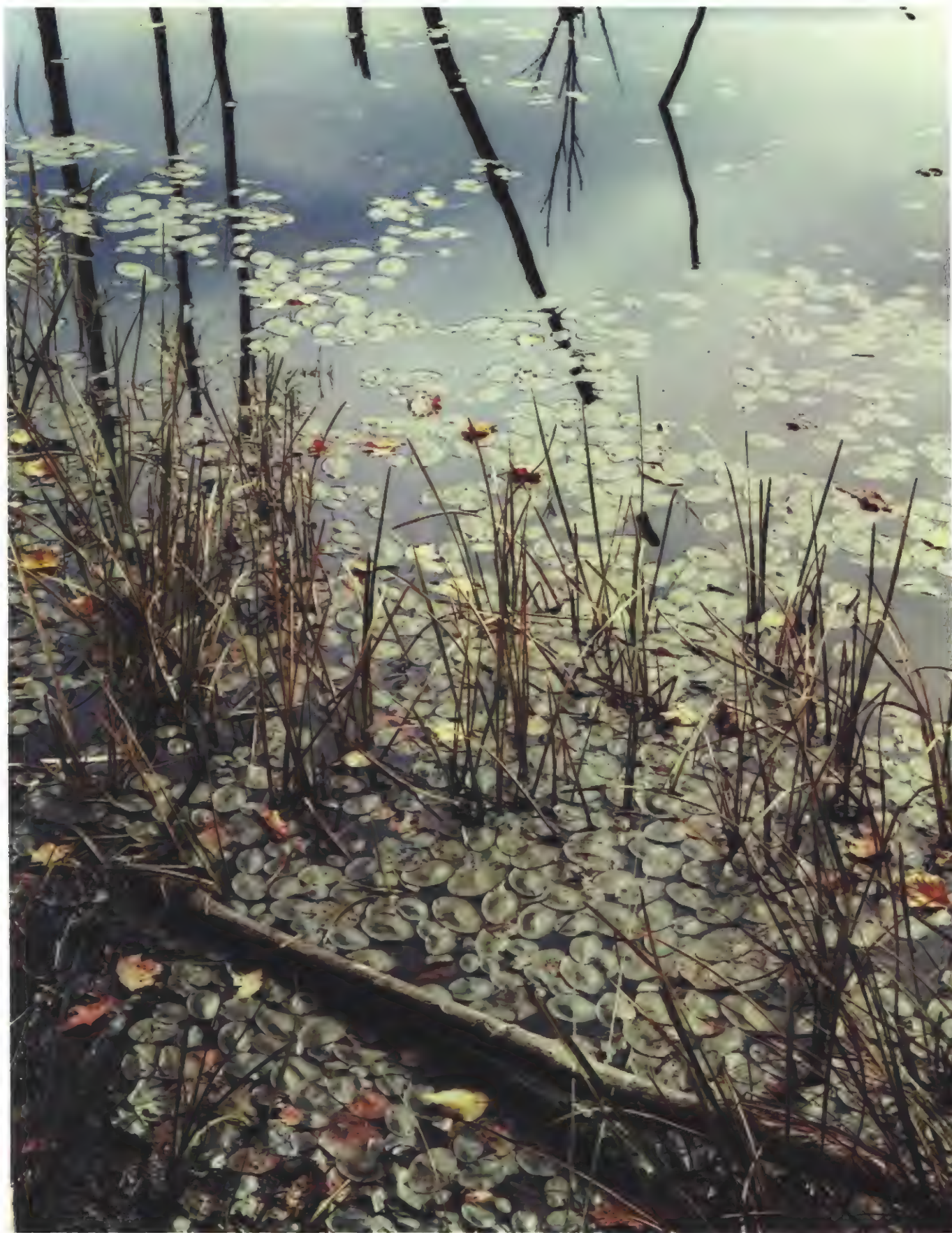
*Shadbush. Near Hillsborough, New Hampshire. April 28, 1957*



[Plate 24]

*Pond with marsh grass and lily pads. Madison, New Hampshire. October 1, 1952*







[Plate 25]

*Dead tree and pool. Waterpocket Fold, Glen Canyon, Utah. August 21, 1963*



[Plate 26]

*Willows in slough. Near Hillsborough, New Hampshire. April 28, 1957*

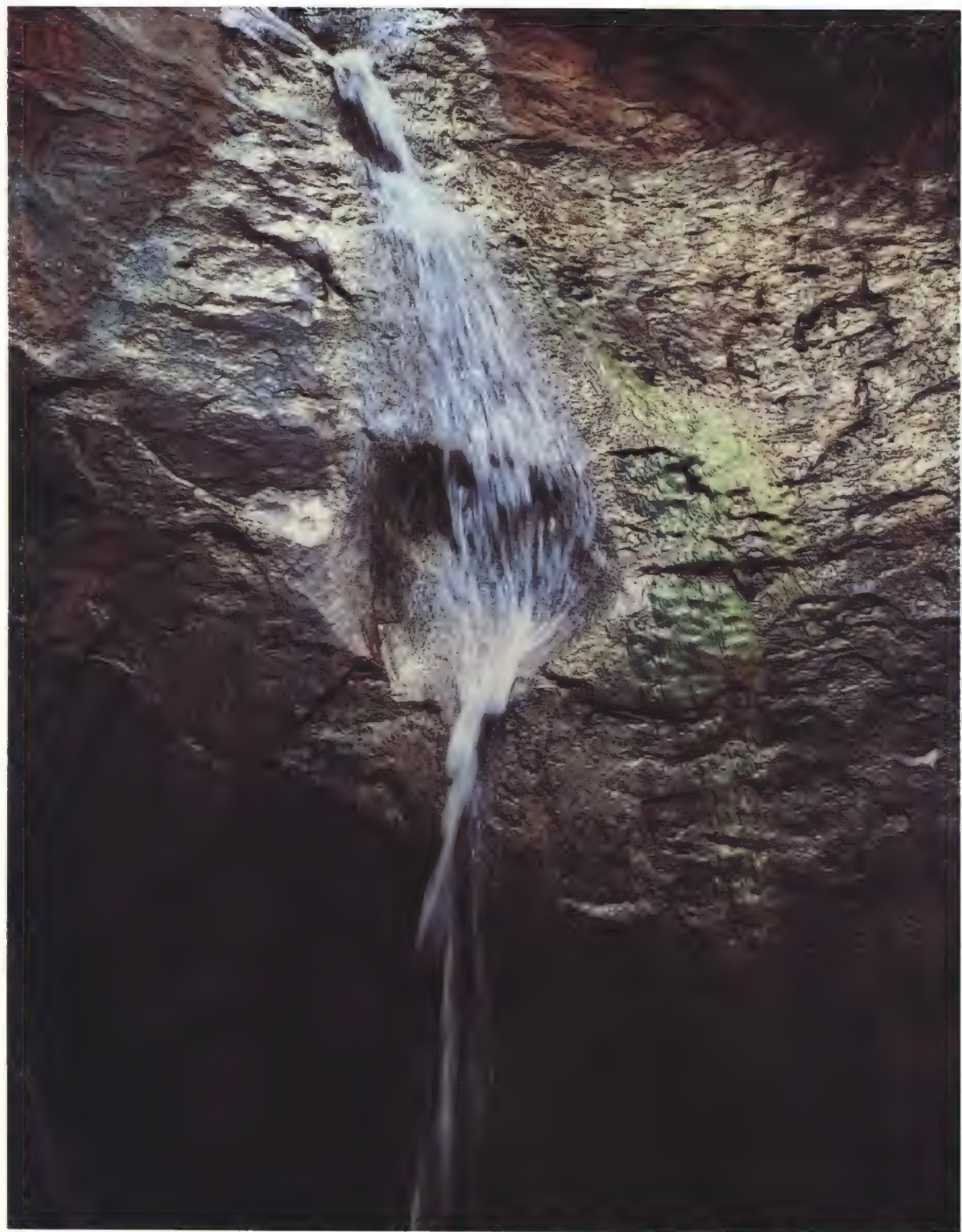






[Plate 27]

*Waterfall. Davis Gulch, Escalante River near Glen Canyon, Utah. May 12, 1965*



[Plate 28]

*Edge of the Colorado River at mile 16. Above House Rock Canyon,  
Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. September 13, 1967*





[Plate 29]

*Edge of the Colorado River at mile 122. Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. June 22, 1967*





[Plate 30]

*Dungeon Canyon. Near Glen Canyon, Utah. August 29, 1961*



[Plate 31]

*Formation of basalt. Sugarloaf, Barred Islands, Maine. August 31, 1972*





[Plate 32]

*Lava and volcanic ash debris. Sullivan Bay, Galápagos Islands. March 10, 1966*





[Plate 33]

*Cirio tree. Near Las Tres Virgenes Volcano, near Mezquital, Baja California. July 31, 1966*





[Plate 34]

*Taos River canyon. Near Taos, New Mexico. October 16, 1962*

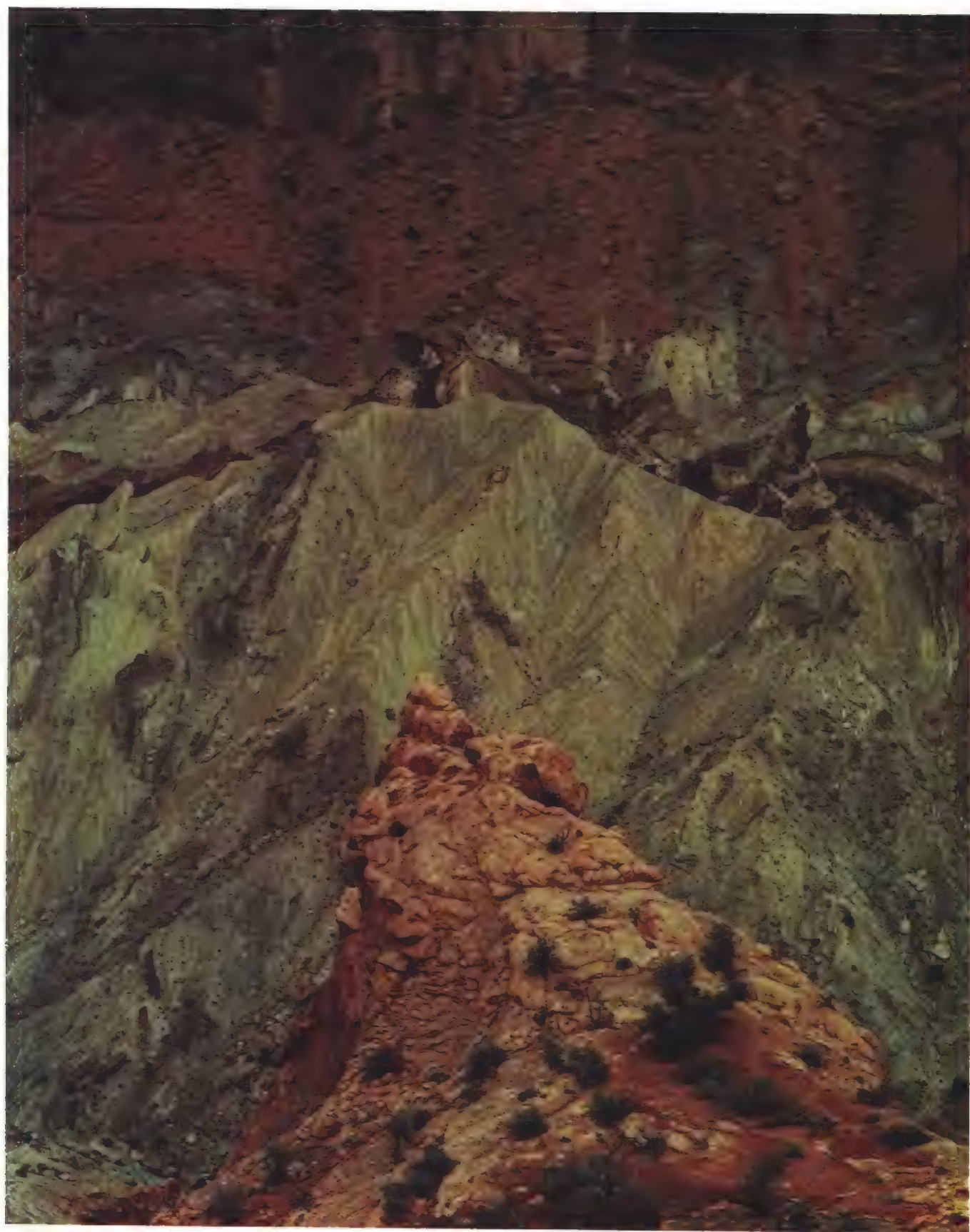




[Plate 35]

*Upheaval Dome. Canyonlands National Park, Utah. May 1, 1973*





[Plate 36]

*Waterfall. Hagavatn, Iceland. August 11, 1972*



[Plate 37]

*Stones and cracked mud. Black Place, New Mexico. June 9, 1977*

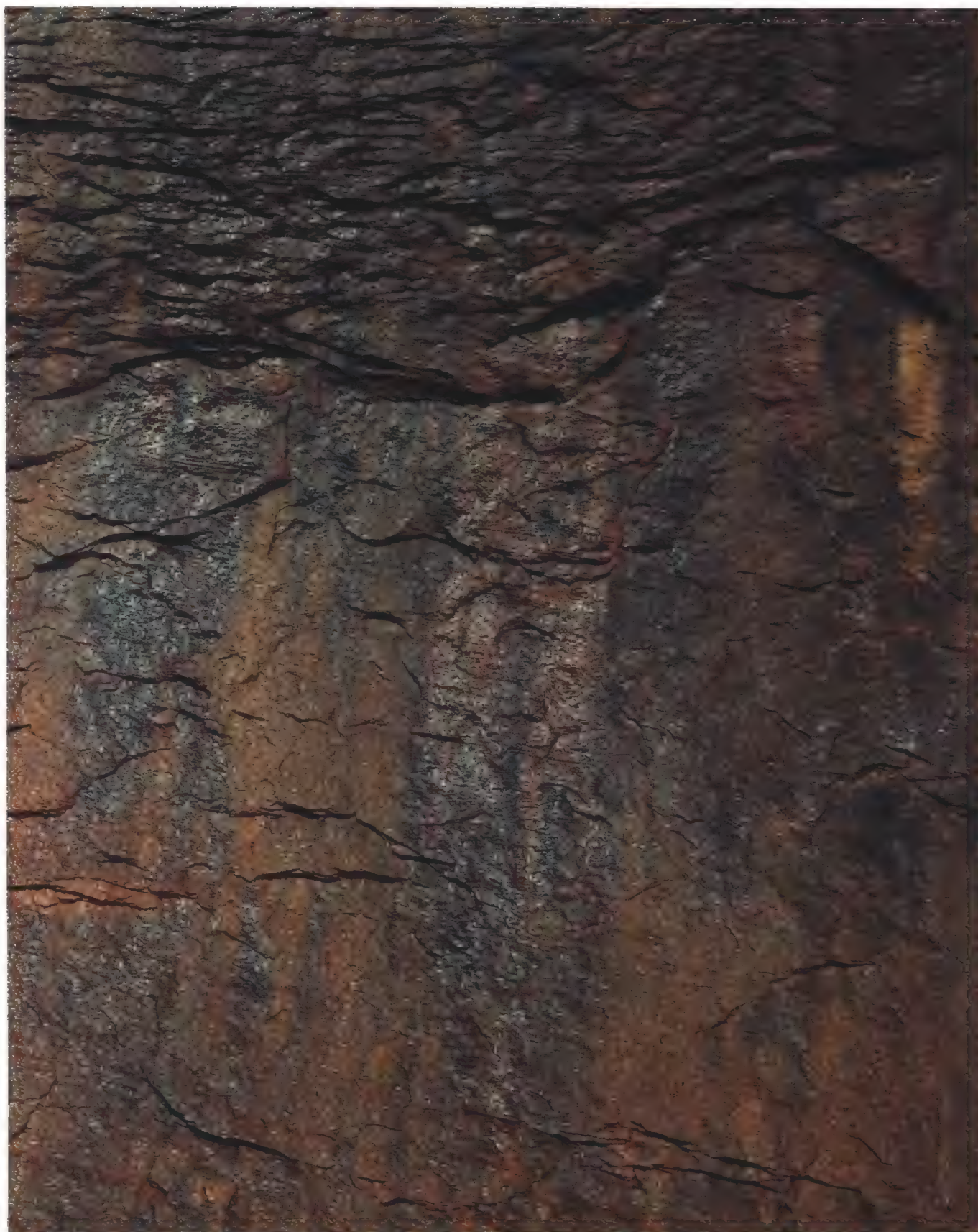




[Plate 38]

*Moist rock wall. Cathedral of the Desert, Clearcreek, Utah. September 22, 1965*





[Plate 39]

*Roots of the strangler fig tree. Everglades National Park, Florida. March 7, 1954*





[Plate 40]

*Pyroclastic lavas. Hitardalur, Snaefellsnes Sýsla, Iceland. July 10, 1972*







[Plate 41]

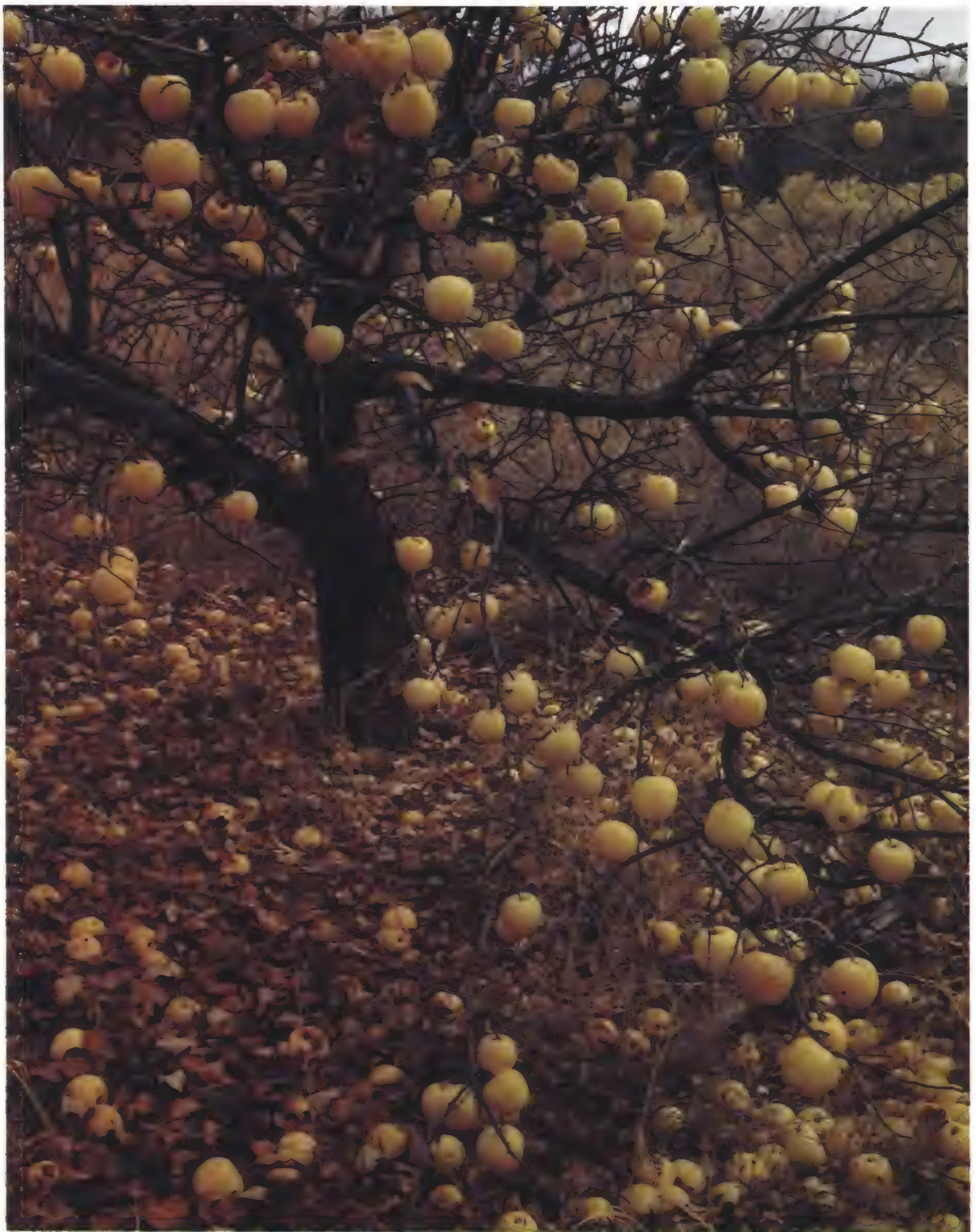
*Desert roses. Tsavo West, Kenya. October 1, 1970*



[Plate 42]

*Frostbitten apples. Tesuque, New Mexico. November 21, 1966*

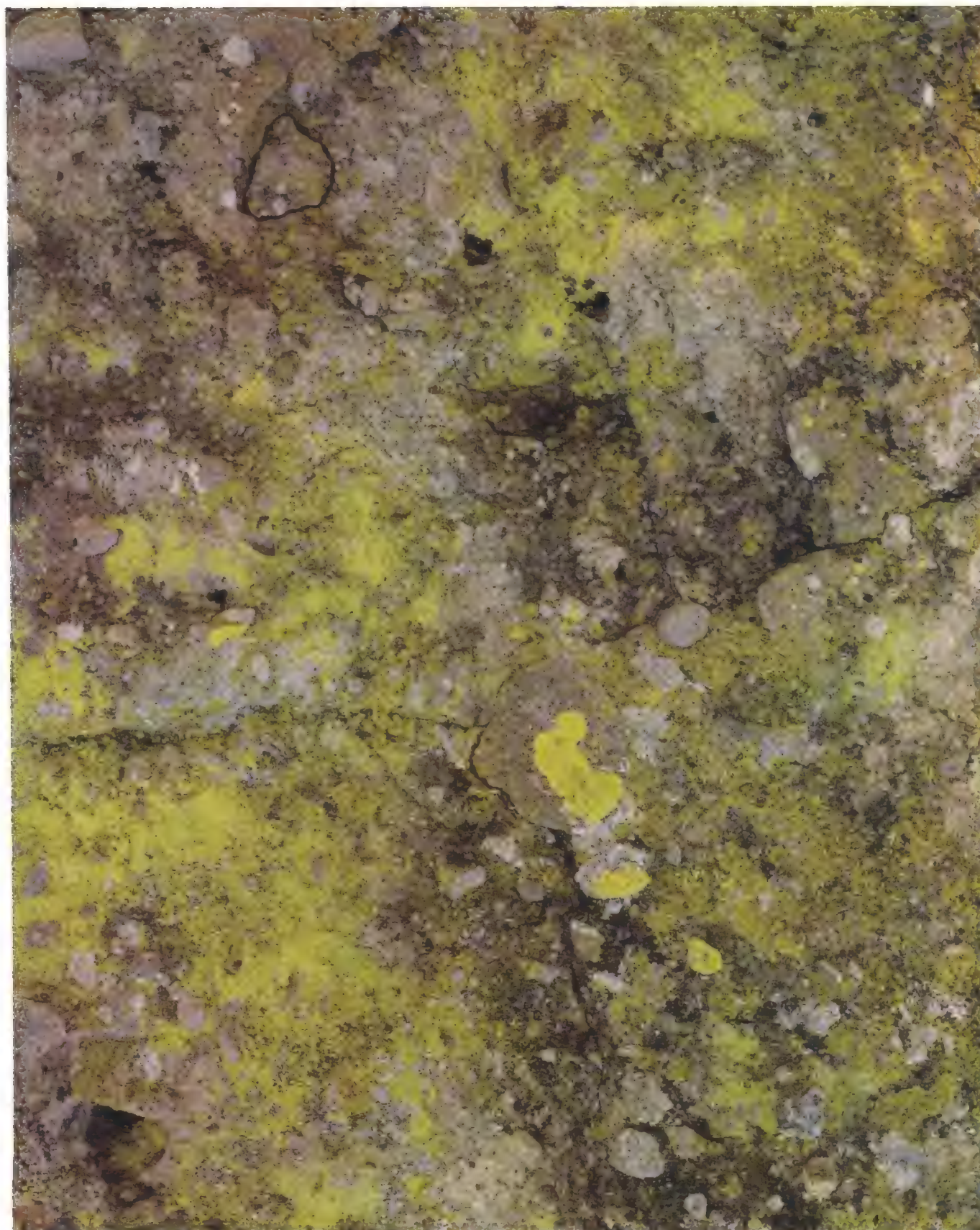




[Plate 43]

*Lichen-covered boulder. Between San Javier and Comondú, Baja California. March 9, 1964*







[Plate 44]

*Blueberry bushes. Near Keene Valley, Adirondack Park, New York. October 1963*



[Plate 45]

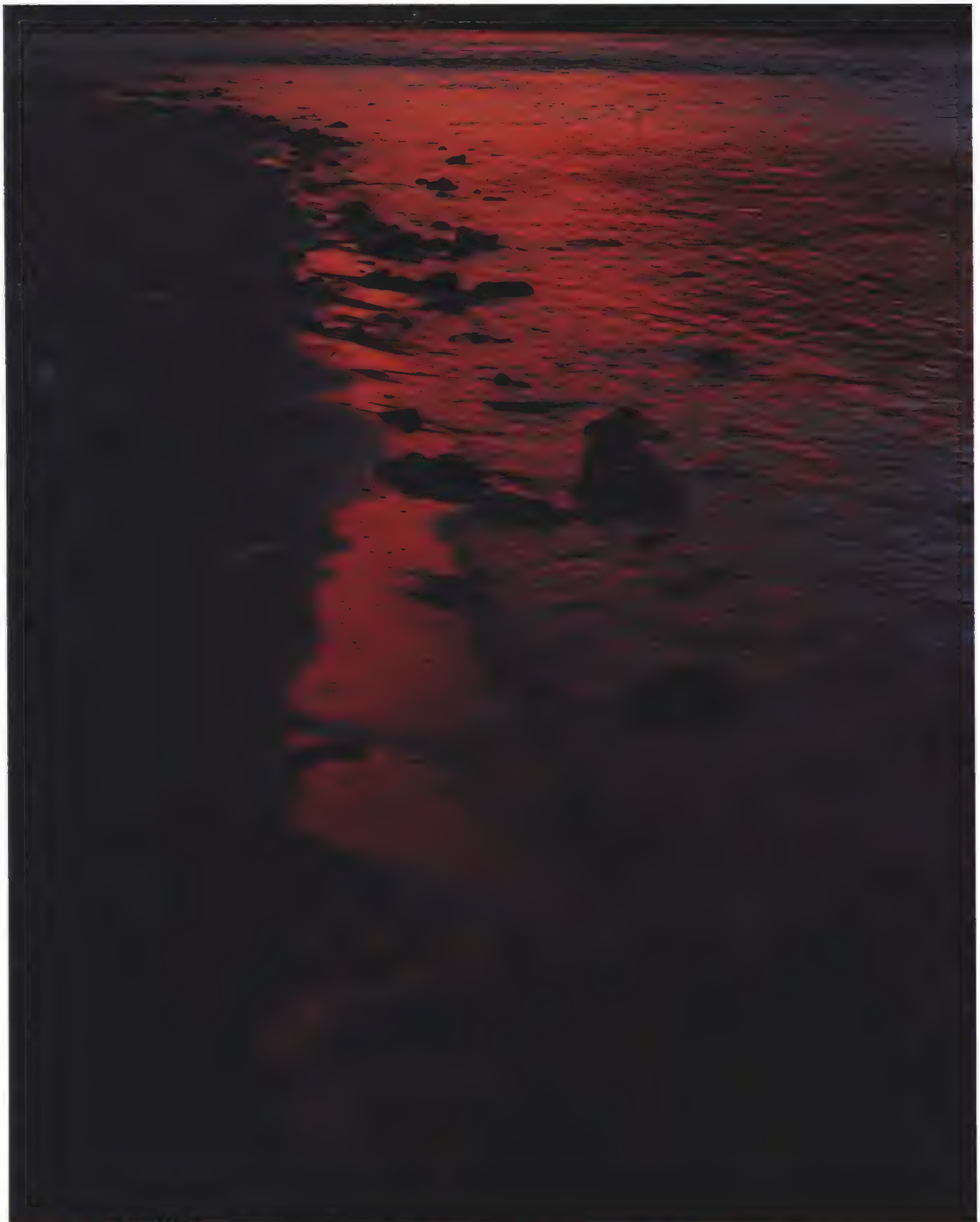
*Colorful trees. Newfound Gap Road, Great Smoky Mountains Park, Tennessee. October 1967*





[Plate 46]

*River edge at Sunset. Below Piute Rapids, San Juan River, Colorado. May 24, 1962*





[Plate 47]

*Rock-eroded stream bed. Coyote Gulch, Utah. August 14, 1971*



[Plate 48]

*Puffer Pond Brook. Warren County, Adirondack Park, New York. May 23, 1964*





[Plate 49]

*Boulder arrangements. Red River Gorge, Kentucky. April 17, 1968*







[Plate 50]

*Near Mason Pond. Hamilton County, Adirondack Park, New York. May 23, 1964*



[Plate 51]

*Tidal marsh. Mount Desert Island, Maine. August 4, 1965*





[Plate 52]

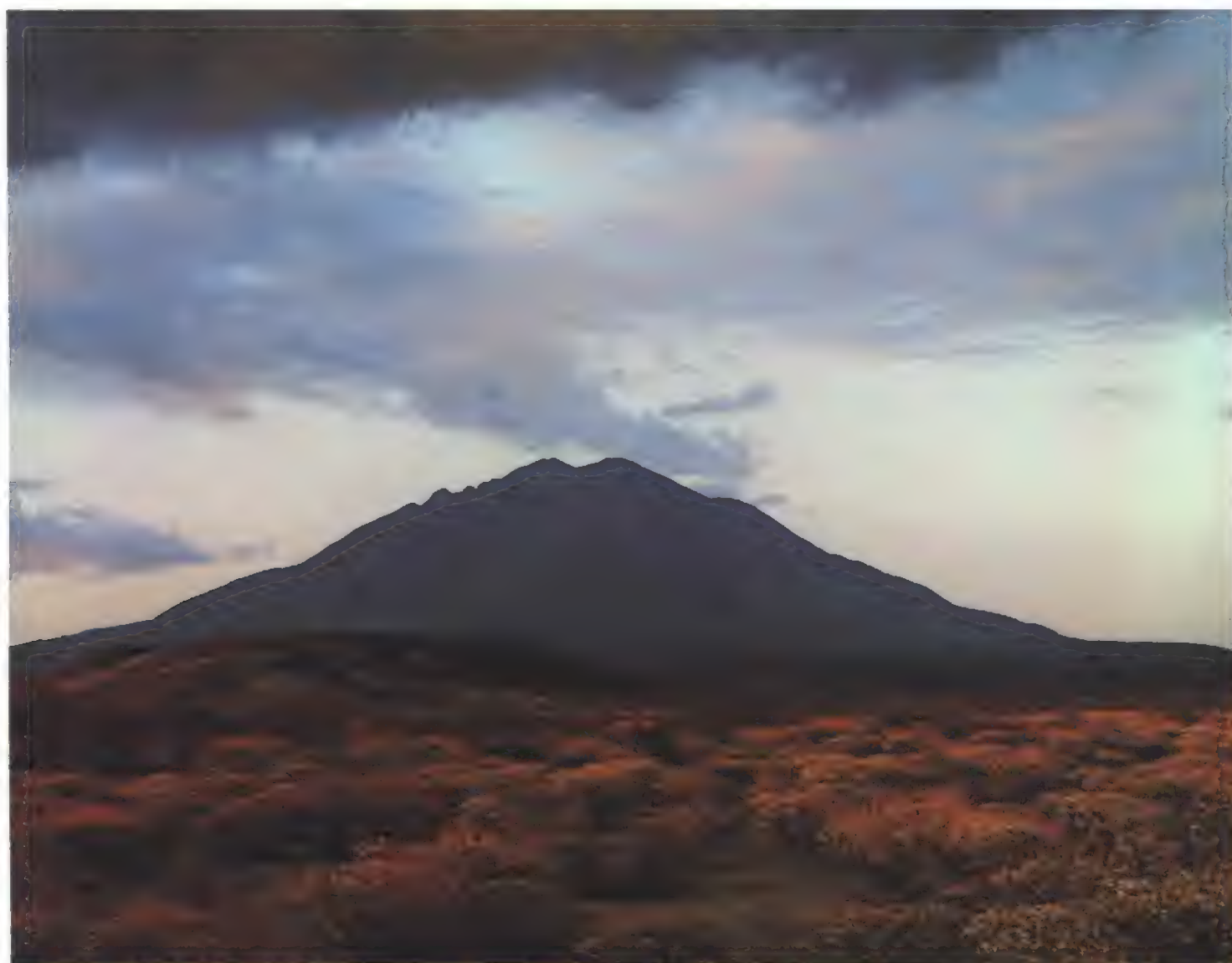
*Into the clouds from the rim. Alcedo Volcano, Galápagos Islands. May 4, 1966*





[Plate 53]

*Sunset behind Las Tres Vírgenes Volcano. Near Mezquital, Baja California. August 12, 1966*



[Plate 54]

*Clouds at sunset. Tesuque, New Mexico. July 1959*





[Plate 55]

*Clouds at sunset. Tesuque, New Mexico. Summer 1960*







Afterword • Chronology

List of Plates

# Afterword

"A WORK OF ART is a detail of nature seen through a temperament," wrote Emile Zola. Somewhat later Paul Klee said that the purpose of art is "to make visible the invisible." The photographs of Eliot Porter satisfy both prescriptions. They are mainly of details from nature, and even though their subjects are not literally invisible, it is plain that Porter endows with form subjects that would otherwise have gone unrecognized, even by someone shadowing the photographer in the wild. Zola aptly stated the problem confronting an artist whose work is grounded in what is seen rather than what is imagined. Every photographer faces to some degree the unspoken question of whether the success of a particular image is due to qualities inherent in the subject, or to the talent of the maker. It is a common misconception when a photograph is a landscape or a portrait, that geography and vegetation, or physiognomy and character, contribute more to its success than does the photographer in his choice of pose, camera, light, and point of view, in the type of paper on which the print is made, and in the psychological atmosphere created by the photographer at the moment of the exposure. (Alfred Stieglitz is sometimes thought, for example, to have contributed less to his remarkable studies of Georgia O'Keeffe than she did as the model—though anyone who scrutinizes the numerous portraits of O'Keeffe by other photographers through the years must wonder why they are so much less successful.)

Porter is a photographer of natural scenes that rarely contain human figures; his occasional portraits are almost entirely of family or close friends. Nature photography resists unambiguous explanation of the maker's role even more than portraiture. Mountains, streams, trees, and boulders cannot be rearranged at will by the photographer, nor would there appear to be any such two-way communication between the nature photographer and his subject as would admit a measure of psychological tension. What, then, are the plastic ingredients that the nature photographer controls that permit self-expression and the establishment of a personal style? Edward Weston pondered this question in Mexico City, writing in his *Daybooks* on August 31, 1924, about a photograph he had made of a palm tree: "*Just the trunk of a palm towering up into the sky; not even a real one—a palm on a piece of paper, a reproduction of nature: I wonder why it should affect one emotionally—and I wonder what prompted me to record it. Many photographs might have been done of this palm, and they would be just a photograph of a palm—Yet this picture is but a photograph of a palm, plus something—something—and I cannot quite say what that something is—and who is there to tell me?*"<sup>1</sup>

Weston's daybook entry focuses on a basic property of the photograph—its character as a magical illusion of reality on a flimsy piece of paper, whose power to affect the viewer emotionally springs from fundamental decisions on the part of the maker. For the painter or photographer whose motifs come from the real world, there must be a process of winnowing from many possibilities what is to be rendered. Only after this initial selection has taken place (Why a palm and not a banana tree; why this palm and not that one?) do the more particular decisions open to the artist or photographer begin to bear upon the final form.

Over and again, as I looked through the files of Eliot Porter's photographs in preparing this exhibition, I wondered why he had decided to photograph a particularly obscure subject, as in Plates 31 and 37, and why, despite their obscurity, I found such images emotionally attractive. How did it happen that nature became the embodiment of a sentiment customarily associated with subjects having some more obvious human interest? Porter himself, in seeking to evoke a particular emotion with his photographs, is careful to avoid the sort of formularized composition that is often the hallmark of pictures making a deliberate emotional appeal. His strongest compositions have the look of carefully planned randomness in which the surface is a tapestry of uniformly significant elements arrayed from one edge of the picture to the other.



The photographs reproduced here are less about specific places (although a wide variety of places, from Maine to Utah, from Iceland to the Galápagos, are represented) than they are about the power of concentration. The central theme of Porter's photographs is not botany, ornithology, or geology—although an understanding of these bodies of knowledge is useful to appreciate them fully—but the very act of contemplation and the mood sustained by the precise control of color relationships.

Although there is no single key to the meaning of Porter's photographs, anything approaching a complete understanding of them can take place only through close attention to the writings of Henry David Thoreau, which Porter had begun rereading in 1950, when the earliest color photograph reproduced here was made [Plate 11]. His development as a twentieth-century Thoreauvian was inspired during a series of camping trips in the Canadian Rockies, and especially during the summers he spent as a boy on Great Spruce Head, an island off the coast of Maine in Penobscot Bay, that was owned by his family. Separated from the mainland by an hour's boat ride, the island became his universe, and it was here that Porter first photographed the birds, plants, forest interiors, and the classic views that would form the most original part of his life's work. It was through the experience of photographing birds, he has said, that he first became aware of how much a detail of nature could reveal about its larger context. At the time his approach to nature had more in common with the method of the scientist than with that of the aesthete, or of the meditative observer he has since become. If Porter's skill as a keen observer of nature was strengthened on Great Spruce Head Island, it was there also that he began to understand that the visual language of the photographer had the same malleability that words have for the poet or pigments for the painter. Slices of nature became for him not isolated fragments but metaphors that stand for and give meaning to the whole from which they are taken. In Porter's mind nature shares with objects of art the common fact that their workings are never fully explained. Like any sublime artifact, nature simply is, before it is fathomed.

Porter was brought up, along with an older sister and three younger brothers, in Winnetka, Illinois, and was sent to boarding school in the East. In 1920 he entered Harvard University, from which he graduated *cum laude* with a major in chemical engineering, and in 1929 he completed his work at Harvard Medical School. For a decade he was an instructor in biochemistry to undergraduates at Harvard, and it was during that period that his boyhood interest in photography was rekindled. Like many photographers of his day, Porter was transfixed by the novelty and precision of Ernst Leitz's Leica camera, which was introduced in 1924. He acquired one around 1930, and his first serious photographs were made with it. They reflect the camera's portability, their subjects ranging from abstract forms in nature to street life. In 1933, after about three years of hard work, a dramatic change in his photographic style was precipitated by a meeting with Ansel Adams.

Adams's photographs, Porter recalls, "*took my breath away by their perfection and strength. Never had I seen any photographs like them.*" Adams suggested to Porter that his photographs might be improved by using a camera larger than the Leica with its miniature negative. Porter began working with a large camera after meeting for the first time with Alfred Stieglitz—an introduction arranged in 1935 or 1936 by Eliot's brother, Fairfield Porter, a painter and an admirer of Stieglitz. Although Stieglitz used the adjective "woolly" to describe Porter's black and white prints, he did offer encouragement to the young photographer, who continued to show Stieglitz his work for several years. One day, as he looked through a box of Porter's prints, Stieglitz declared, "*You have arrived. I want to show these.*"<sup>2</sup> The show opened at Stieglitz's gallery, An American Place, in December 1938.



*Song sparrow's nest in blueberry bush. June 1938*

(The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 49.55.180)

An American Place was not, however, the first New York art gallery to show Porter's photographs. In 1936, between February 24 and March 8, Alma Reed—who had already shown the work of Ansel Adams—exhibited thirty-seven of Porter's prints at the Delphic Studios gallery. The friendly relationship that had developed between Adams and Porter at this time was not unlike that in Paris between their stylistic opposites, André Kertész and the slightly younger Brassai, whom Kertész is said to have persuaded to give up painting and become a photographer. Porter, as the junior (and last) photographer to be selected by Stieglitz for an exhibition at his prestigious gallery, would soon rival his two early mentors, Adams and Stieglitz. In 1938 Porter's knowledge of the world of photography was still sparse. He recalls having heard of Stieglitz's publication *Camera Work*, but having not yet seen a copy. The only names from the *Camera Work* epoch familiar to him were those of Edward Steichen and Paul Strand. Stieglitz had shown some of his own photographs to Porter, who remembers being particularly impressed by the dying poplars at Lake George and the New York skyscraper series. An echo of Stieglitz's image occurs in Porter's *Red osier* [Plate 14]. Porter's photographs were displayed at An American Place along with Charles Demuth's monumental painting *I Saw the Figure Five in Gold* (The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 49.59.1)—a pairing that was an event in its own right. Howard Devree wrote of it in the *New York Times*: "Porter compasses an amazing clarity with very real feeling, even tenderness. In increasing measure much of the best photography seems to me to express very personal viewpoints and to summon up an emotional response as painting does."<sup>3</sup>

Stieglitz acquired three photographs from the exhibition for his personal collection. Of these the most untypical in subject matter was *Jonathan*, a portrait of the photographer's son.<sup>4</sup> *Jonathan* combined intimate humanity with the sharp-focus formalism that Stieglitz was at this time finding so attractive. We see in this image Porter's inclination to move in close to his subject, allowing a part to stand for the whole. *Song sparrow's nest in blueberry bush* is perhaps the earliest work to show the indelible signature of Porter as a nature photographer—a still-life composition from a subject that, as the title suggests, might be an ornithologist's record, but one that goes beyond scientific observation. The true subject of the photograph is the relationship among natural orders, and the disclosure of how pattern and ornament exist harmoniously in nature without the imposition by the photographer of an external, artificial schema. It is this treatment that raises such a photograph from the realm of document into that of art.

A major outcome of Porter's show at An American Place was that in 1940, at the age of thirty-eight, he changed professions, giving up his teaching career and placing his engineering and M.D. degrees on the shelf. He had been making serious black and white photographs since 1933. Now, in a gesture of audacious self-determination, he began working almost exclusively with color.

The rendering of color had been one of the first goals of the inventors of photography. The physical principles on which it was to be based had been demonstrated by Sir James Clerk-Maxwell as far back as 1861. In 1906, the Lumière brothers had introduced the autochrome process, and it quickly became popular with such artist-photographers as Alvin Langdon Coburn, Baron de Meyer, Frederick H. Evans, Frank Eugene, Steichen, and Stieglitz. The first book fully illustrated with color photographs was Charles Holme's *Colour Photography and Other Recent Developments of the Art of the Camera*, which appeared in 1908. The autochrome process proved to be a short-lived fad, however, since the glass transparencies that it employed did not lend themselves to being exhibited, and since there were no means outside well-equipped scientific laboratories of making facsimile color prints except on a printing press. An interlocking series of inven-

tions in the 1920s and 1930s made color photography a practical reality. Shortly after the materials for the process became commercially available, Porter began experimenting with them. The limitations still to be overcome were solidly stated in 1939 by the painter, photographer, and filmmaker Lázló Moholy-Nagy: “Color photography is still grappling, as it has been for forty years, with the problem of providing a colored reproduction of nature which should be satisfactory in every respect.”<sup>5</sup> Porter, mindful of this problem, began working with Kodachrome transparencies, from which he made prints in wash-off relief, later marketed under the “dye-transfer” label. In 1940 Paul Outerbridge, who was primarily a photographer of advertising and commercial subjects, published *Photographing in Color*, a how-to-do-it manual illustrated with his own work, which influenced Porter as he began to experiment with color.

It is characteristic of Porter’s evolving career as a camera artist that he drew on the work of a succession of important picture makers, from each of whom he was able to learn without being influenced unduly by any one of them—another way of saying that from the start he had enough self-confidence to follow his own creative instincts. Having renewed his youthful interest in birds, Porter applied to the Guggenheim Foundation for support in the project of photographing certain species in color. The project was interrupted by World War II, when Porter went to work as a machinist in the radiation laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an assignment calling for the kind of manual dexterity that is an asset in the day in, day out shop procedures of the photographer. Whereas the photograph itself is the product of pure idea, the process of making the idea tangible requires an enormous amount of handwork after the exposure is made. The color transparency is developed; then, three black and white separation negatives are made; and from them, three positives are made, one for each of the three secondary colors—cyan, magenta, and yellow—which are superimposed to realize the final dye-transfer print. When there is added to the darkroom labor the time for drying, trimming, mounting, and the filing of prints, separation negatives, and transparencies, it becomes evident that the serious color photographer must lead a double life—one spent outside the studio making exposures, the other spent inside executing the many details. Porter’s finely maintained archive attests to how well he performs both tasks.

In 1949 Porter’s Guggenheim Fellowship was renewed, and he continued to photograph birds, using a method of flash illumination that he devised. Porter’s bird pictures might be interpreted by the purist as excursive. Before being dismissed as irrelevant, however, some of the lessons taught by photographing birds should be considered. One of Porter’s reasons for taking up color photography had been to provide a means of identifying birds by the coloration of species and sex. The need to render accurately the subtle markings of birds required him to perfect a technique beyond what all but a few others had realized. The processes, first of studying the creature before the exposure is made, and then of refining the interpretation by all the technical means available, drew Porter’s attention to the color photograph as a language, and to the delicacy of color relationships in nature. Until Porter devised his own ways of photographing birds in the field, it had been the practice to photograph specimens in captivity for illustrational purposes. For Porter an important part of the process was finding his subjects and, once they had been located, getting close enough, with sufficient illumination to make the exposure. At the heart of this procedure are the fisherman’s sure sense for time and place, his patience in awaiting favorable conditions, and the technical ingenuity for adapting mechanical equipment. The landscape photographer must apply the same skills—cunning in locating the perfect motif, patience in overcoming or waiting out unfavorable light and weather, and ingenuity in getting equipment to perform under adverse conditions. Porter’s work with



birds might be likened to a self-imposed academic course in the stalking of nature. It is not farfetched to recall in this connection the years Michelangelo spent supervising the opening of the marble quarries at Carrara, during which he familiarized himself with the materials he would use to create his sculptures. Likewise for Porter the experience of dealing closely with a limited subject was to prove valuable in photographing more expansive ones. In 1943 Nancy Newhall, who was then acting curator of photographs at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, made a selection of Porter's bird photographs, which were exhibited there from March 9 to April 18.

By the early 1950s Porter had ceased working in black and white, and he never seriously returned to it. The difference between photographing in black and white and in color are enormous; in the words of Edwin Land, black and white is "*the language for delineating objects*," and color photography "*the language for displaying illumination*."<sup>6</sup>

Porter is unsure about exactly when he began rereading Thoreau, but he recalls that it was in the late 1940s or early 1950s, after his wife, Aline, who is a painter, observed how much his photographs had in common with the writings of the chronicler of life at Walden Pond. Once he had recognized the affinity, he set about systematically creating graphic equivalents of passages that had inspired him. The earliest of his color photographs that seem directly addressed to the Thoreauvian ideal of nature as an aesthetic continuum, from minutiae of grass and insects to the grandeur of geological formations, dates from 1950. *Aspen, yellow leaves, and asters* [Plate 11] was made in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Porter had resettled with his wife and family in 1946. The point of view of *Aspen, yellow leaves, and asters* is that of a person stooping to scrutinize a mass of flowers and leaves growing to waist level. In its composition Porter shows his mastery of cropping, boldly slicing through leaf-tips and intersecting the tree close to its base. The photograph, despite the remoteness of the scene from New England, is related directly to a passage in Thoreau's *Journal* dated October 25, 1852, that Porter had reread many times: "Some small bushy white asters still survive. The autumnal tints grow gradually darker and duller, but not less rich to my eye. And now a hillside near the river exhibits the darkest, crispy reds and browns of every hue, all agreeably blended. At the foot, next the meadow, stands a front rank of smoke-like maples bare of leaves, intermixed with yellow birches. Higher up, are red oaks of various shades of dull red, with yellowish, perhaps black oaks intermixed, and walnuts, now brown, and near the hill-top, or rising above the rest, perhaps, a still yellow oak, and here and there amid the rest or in the foreground on the meadow, dull ashy salmon-colored white oaks large and small, all these contrasting with the clear liquid, sempiternal green of pines."<sup>7</sup> The most striking feature of this passage is the way the concern with color overrides concern with shapes and forms. The genius of Porter's photograph is that it amalgamates a concern for pure form with that for color—which indeed marks it as a work of the twentieth, rather than of the nineteenth, century.

Thoreau was a close student of Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose essay *Nature*, published in 1835, is the literary touchstone of modern nature consciousness, and has been called "*the philosophical constitution of transcendentalism*,"<sup>8</sup> the nonsectarian belief that a mystical union with God was possible through nature. Emerson believed that artists were instrumental in giving plain people "*new eyes*. . . . Go out to walk with a painter," he wrote, "*and you shall see for the first time groups, colors, clouds, and keepings, and shall have the pleasure of discovering resources in a hitherto barren ground, of finding as good as a new sense in such skill to use an old one.*"<sup>9</sup> Through his role as a camera artist, Porter takes on the function of Emerson's "*new eyes*," becoming a mentor whose language and teachings are visual to the exclusion of all but the most general literary content.

Among the tenets of transcendentalism were a preference for time-honored life-styles over the habits

spawned by the industrial revolution, a commitment to self-reliance and individualism, and a mistrust of cities. These were among the concerns that took Porter and his family away from the crowded Northeast to the Southwest. Paradoxically, it was Porter's engagement with Thoreau that drew him back East in 1952, when he photographed motifs nearer to the actual haunts of Thoreau. *Pond with marsh grass and lily pads* [Plate 24] might equally well be titled *Flint's Pond*, after a passage in *Walden*: "FLINT'S POND! Such is the poverty of our nomenclature. What right had the unclean and stupid farmer, whose farm abutted on this sky water, whose shores he had ruthlessly laid bare, to give his name to it? Some skin-flint, who loved the reflecting surface of a dollar, or a bright cent, in which he could see his own brazen face; who regarded even the wild ducks which settled in it as trespassers; his fingers grown into crooked and horny talons from the long habit of grasping harpy-like;—so it is not named for me."<sup>10</sup>

Hans Huth has written of Thoreau that he "seems to have made himself a part of nature and to have learned more from it than all the scientific observers had learned by rationalistic study."<sup>11</sup> Like Thoreau, Porter brings to his interpretation of nature an element that is far from scientific in its spirit but meticulous in its method.

A photograph made in 1953, of Pond Brook, near Whiteface, New Hampshire [Plate 22], is Porter's supreme homage to Thoreau. A passage in Thoreau's *Journal* for October 7, 1857, contains the following description of trees reflected in a brook and the purely optical effect it had upon him: "I saw, by a peculiar intention or dividing of the eye, a very striking subaqueous rainbow-like phenomenon. . . . Those brilliant shrubs, which were from three to a dozen feet in height, were all reflected, dimly so far as the details of leaves, etc., were concerned, but brightly as to color, and, of course, in the order in which they stood,—scarlet, yellow, green, etc.; but, there being a slight ripple on the surface, these reflections were not true to their height though true to their breadth, but were extended downward with mathematical perpendicularity, three or four times too far, forming sharp pyramids of the several colors, gradually reduced to mere dusky points. The effect of this prolongation of the reflection was a very pleasing softening and blending of the colors, especially when a small bush of one bright tint stood directly before another of a contrary and equally bright tint. It was just as if you were to brush firmly aside with your hand or a brush a fresh line of paint of various colors, or so many lumps of friable colored powders."<sup>12</sup> The observant depiction of color is here less astonishing than the attention given to the process of perception itself—a "dividing of the eye," as Thoreau described it.

The project of documentary passages from Thoreau continued from 1950 until 1962 and culminated in Porter's first monograph, *"In Wildness is the Preservation of the World," from Henry David Thoreau*. Before 1962 Porter had contributed a great many bird photographs to textbooks and anthologies, and he had occasionally been represented in such collections of landscape photographs as Ivan T. Sanderson's *The Continent We Live On* (1959), as well as in Tom Maloney's *The Fifty Stars of the U.S.A.*, U.S. Camera 1960. His proposal for a book of photographs based on Thoreau had been rejected by a score of trade publishers when David Brower, then executive director of the Sierra Club, saw the prototype and was responsible for turning Porter's Thoreau photographs into a book. The project was phenomenally successful, and a second edition of *"In Wildness is the Preservation of the World"* was issued in 1967—a rarity for any book of photographs.

Along the way there had been several well-selected exhibitions, although none was in itself equal in importance to the one in 1939 at An American Place. In that same year, Beaumont Newhall had included an example of Porter's work in the show inaugurating the photography department at The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition of Porter's bird photographs at the same museum in 1943 was followed in 1951 by an important show at the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, for which Beaumont Newhall was responsible. Porter was also receiving attention from the few commercial galleries of photography that were left to fill the vacuum following Stieglitz's death in 1946. An exhibition of sixty color

prints at the Limelight Gallery from March 21 to April 17, 1955, selected by Helen Gee, amounted to a retrospective. In August 1959, a modest Santa Fe boutique known as the Centerline General Store gave Porter space to mount an exhibition of prints from the Thoreau series, entitled "The Seasons: A Photographic Essay." A year later, the George Eastman House prepared an expanded version of this exhibition, accompanied by quotations from Thoreau, which was later circulated by the Smithsonian. Over a period of four years, it reached dozens of galleries and was seen by thousands of people.

Porter's association with the Sierra Club, which continued to publish his books until 1968, was at once a blessing and a burden. With the publication in 1963 of *The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado*, he came to be considered as exclusively a propagandist for the conservation movement. That misconception may have been reinforced by a turn in his own working habits around 1956, when he began to work with subjects that called him to many wilderness regions of the world: the Galápagos Islands (1966), Africa (1970), Iceland (1972), and Antarctica (1974-1975). Despite the many problems posed for the photographer by unfamiliar terrain, his motivation was above all to personalize rather than to generalize his experiences. Writing on the Glen Canyon series, Porter tells us, "Of all the phenomena of the side canyons, it is the light, even in the farthest depths of the narrowest canyon, that evokes the ultimate awe," a passage that aptly fits Plate 30. In 1966 the Sierra Club published *Summer Island: Penobscot Country*, thirty years after he had begun in earnest the project of depicting the area where his earliest photographs were made, and where his meticulous working procedure was established. He observed: "On the Island . . . one may watch nature freely manifest herself in the chain of succession from one living form to another, from season to season, and from decade to decade. Birth, germination, growth, and death follow an inevitable sequence. A tree becomes a fungus, the fungus becomes soil, and soil a new plant. The leaf is food for an insect, which in turn is food for a bird. Over a longer period of time, some forms of life disappear and new forms are introduced. Why these changes take place is a puzzle for which there may never be a solution."<sup>13</sup>

As a member of the first generation of this century's color photographers, Porter pioneered the application of the highest technical standards to work that had no commercial intent. With the proliferation of travel and the increased portability and automation of cameras, there remains an enormous gap between the work of the scatter-shot amateur and the slick commercial photographer who exploits rather than interprets his locales. The photographs Porter has traveled great distances to make raise the issue of whether it is possible to minimize or even to remove the association an image has with a particular culture or continent. One aspect of his work is undoubtedly a tendency to degeographize the image. The selections presented here are notable for the way they defy specific identification with the places where they were made. In this, as in his earlier work, Porter's visual intelligence is a fountainhead for photographers of a later generation.

Porter's eye is often captivated by colors that have not been named, that have never been packaged into tubes of pigment. "It seems natural that rocks which have lain under the heavens so long should be gray, as it were an intermediate color between the heavens and the earth," observed Thoreau in his *Journal* for June 23, 1852;<sup>14</sup> and it was perhaps he who led Porter to his love of the noncolors of rocks. For example, *Formation of basalt* [Plate 31], though almost black, is also a study of the impressionistic character of light.

For all the instances of Porter's looking toward his feet or straight ahead, he also takes delight in expanses that confuse our sense of space and scale through the interplay of unexpected tones. We do not anticipate a ribbonlike S-curve of yellow along a desert ravine such as he found in *Taos River canyon* [Plate 34]; nor are distances easy to decipher, couched as they are in closely related tones of green and brown,

in *Upheaval Dome*, Canyonlands National Park, Utah [Plate 35]. Nor does Porter always require heights or sublime vistas to mold space to his own ends. His *Trunks of maple and birch with oak leaves* [Plate 12] is as much about spatial ambiguity—where the light and dark coloring fools the eye into believing one branch is overlaying another or that a pocket of space exists where it does not—as it is about the random patterns of the bark and the arrangement of the leaves.

It would be a mistake to give the impression that Porter is always bound to the material effects of earth, water, and fire, since effects of atmosphere also play an important role in his iconography of forms. He sees a pastel mixture of green and white in the clouds from the rim of Alcedo Volcano in the Galápagos Islands [Plate 52], whereas in the sunset view near Mezquital, Baja California [Plate 53], it is the full interaction of color in earth, air, and atmosphere that is the key. His skill as a painter in light is nowhere more elegantly rendered than in the cloud studies made from his New Mexico backyard. In one we see a treelike formation of clouds that suggests both earth and air, and our concluding photograph [Plate 55] is a meditation on pure color.

In the sequence of photographs in this book we can see the special character of Eliot Porter as a pragmatic artist-philosopher. From photographs where the eye looks down the series progresses to those where the eye looks up. The mood flows from one of intense concentration on carefully framed details to a meditation on the cosmos. If nature is—in the words of the photographer himself—a puzzle with no solution, then these landscapes are to be appreciated for providing us with an intimate view of the pieces in the puzzle, thereby bringing us one step closer to understanding.

WESTON J. NAEF

1. Nancy Newhall, ed., *The Daybooks of Edward Weston* (Rochester, 1961), Vol. I, *Mexico*, p. 91, August 31, 1924.
2. Weston J. Naef, *The Collection of Alfred Stieglitz: Fifty Pioneers of Modern Photography* (New York, 1978), p. 244.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
4. *Ibid.*, no. 418.
5. L. Moholy-Nagy, "Paths to the Unleashed Color Camera," reprinted in *Moholy-Nagy*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York and Washington, 1970), p. 66.
6. Edwin Land, *Polaroid Corporation Annual Report, 1977* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), p. 3.
7. Quoted in Eliot Porter, "*In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*" from *Henry David Thoreau* (San Francisco, 1962), p. 140.
8. Hans Huth, *Nature and the American*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, 1972), p. 88.
9. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 89.
10. Quoted in Porter, "*In Wildness*," p. 102.
11. Huth, *Nature and the American*, p. 95.
12. Quoted in Porter, "*In Wildness*," p. 124.
13. Eliot Porter, *Summer Island: Penobscot Country* (San Francisco, 1966), p. 100.
14. Quoted in Porter, "*In Wildness*," p. 86.



# Chronology

- 1901: Born Eliot Furness Porter in Winnetka, Illinois, December 6.
- BEFORE 1913: Receives Kodak box camera. Photographs landscapes patterned on his father's snapshots.
- 1913: Photographs birds, Great Spruce Head Island, Maine, family summer residence.
- 1920: Enters Harvard University. Studies chemical engineering.
- 1924: Bachelor of science degree from Harvard Engineering School. Enters Harvard Medical School.
- 1929: Doctor of medicine degree from Harvard Medical School, under Dr. Hans Zinnser.
- 1930: Purchases Leica camera. Resumes photography of nature and other subjects.
- 1930–1938: Researches and teaches bacteriology and biological chemistry.
- 1936: Exhibition of thirty-seven photographs, Delphic Studios, New York, February 24–March 8. Checklist with brief statement by Porter.
- ABOUT 1936: Meets Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe at Stieglitz's gallery, An American Place, New York.
- 1937: Resumes bird photography. Temporarily discontinues landscape photography.  
Tyrol, Austria, photograph published in *U. S. Camera* 1937, with brief statement by Porter.
- 1938: Group exhibition *The Fifth International Salon of Photography*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, April 14–28.  
Exhibition of twenty-nine photographs of landscapes, village scenes, and birds, An American Place, December 29–January 18, 1939; introductory note by Alfred Stieglitz; reviewed in *New York Sun* (December 31), *New York Times* (January 1), *Art News* (January 7), *Time* (January 14).  
Represented in inaugural issue of *U. S. Camera Magazine*, 1 (Autumn), p. 2.
- 1939: Resigns from teaching. Begins career in photography, specializing in landscape and wildlife subjects.  
Devises method of flash photography with specially constructed blinds, scaffolds, and high ladders for recording birds in their natural habitat.  
Exhibition at bookshop of Georgia Lingafelt, Chicago, same photographs as in An American Place exhibition of 1938–1939.  
Group exhibition *Sixty Photographs*, Winter 1939–1940, the first exhibition by the Department of Photography of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Beaumont Newhall, curator. Checklist and statement by Newhall, *The Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art*, 8 (December-January), pp. 4–7.  
Writes "Photographing Birds," *U. S. Camera Magazine*, 3 (March-April), pp. 18–21.  
Appreciation by Dorothy Norman of *Jonathan*, in *Twice a Year*, 2 (Spring-Summer), p. 5.
- 1940: Begins specialization in color photography.  
Group exhibition *Seventh International Salon of Photography*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, March 6–29.  
One-man exhibition, the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, March 15–30.  
Group exhibition, the San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, organized by Ansel Adams.  
Writes "Chemistry, Medicine, Law and Photography: The Autobiography of a Photographer," *U. S. Camera Magazine*, 8 (February-March), pp. 26–29.
- 1941: Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship to photograph "certain species of birds in the United States."  
Group exhibition *Image of Freedom*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 29–February 1, 1942; juried by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Monroe Wheeler, and Beaumont Newhall; Newhall, *The Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art*, 9 (November), pp. 14–16.
- 1942: Exhibition, Katharine Kuh Gallery, Chicago, February 23–March 14; reviewed in *Chicago Daily News* (February 28), *Chicago Sun* (February 28), *Chicago Tribune* (March 1), *Chicago Herald-American* (March 8).  
Exhibition of bird photographs at Heads and Horns Gallery, New York Zoological Society, New York, May 30–June 30; reviewed in *New York Times* (May 31).

- 1942–1944: Employed in the machine shop of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston.
- 1943: Exhibition *Birds in Color: Flashlight Photographs by Eliot Porter*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 9–April 18; fifty-four photographs selected by Nancy Newhall, who wrote: “He insisted on attaining three things: a clear and characteristic portrait of the bird, a technically good photograph and an emotionally satisfying picture,” *The Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art*, 10 (April), p. 6. Circulated by The Museum of Modern Art, 1943–1944.
- Seven bird photographs published in *Life*, 14 (May 17), pp. 58–62.
- 1944: Returns to Winnetka, Illinois.
- Group exhibition *American Photography Today*, American Contemporary Art Gallery, New York, July 31–August 31; four prints selected by Elizabeth McCausland.
- 1946: Settles in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Photographer-at-large for *Audubon Magazine*.
- Included in *Poets’ Camera*, an anthology of photographs edited by Bryan Holme and poetry edited by Thomas Forman (New York and London: the Holme Press and American Studio Books).
- 1949: Again awarded Guggenheim Fellowship to continue photographing birds.
- 1950: Plate 11 (September 20).
- Group exhibition *The Second Country Life International Exhibition of Wildlife Photographs*, Central Hall, Westminster, London, March 20–April 1; fourteen prints. Awarded silver plaque for color prints.
- 1951: Travel in Mexico with his wife and Georgia O’Keeffe photographing church architecture.
- One-man exhibition, the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, November–December; selected by Beaumont Newhall.
- 1952: Plate 24 (October 1).
- 1953: Plate 22 (October).
- The Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1943 circulated by Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to twenty institutions, 1953–1957.
- One hundred four photographs by Porter published in Robert C. Murphy and Dean Amadon, *Land Birds of America* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.). *American Birds: Ten Photographs in Color*, introduction and photographs by Porter, issued simultaneously by the publisher.
- 1954: Four bird photographs reproduced in twentieth anniversary edition of *U. S. Camera* 1955.
- 1955: Group exhibition *This Is The American Earth*, LeConte Lodge, Yosemite Valley, California, and California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; organized by Nancy Newhall and Ansel Adams. Circulated by Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, April 1956–May 1957, and by the United States Information Agency.
- Exhibition of sixty color prints, the Limelight Gallery, New York, March 21–April 17; selected by Helen Gee; reviewed in *New York Times* (March 27).
- 1955–1956: Travels in Mexico with Ellen Auerbach photographing church architecture.
- 1956: Plates 2 (October 3), 12 (October 7).
- Group exhibition *The First New Mexico Photographers Exhibition*, the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, June 17–July 14; awarded first and third prizes in the pictorial category.
- Twenty-eight photographs published in anthology *Nature’s Wonders in Full Color*, edited by Charles L. Sherman (Garden City: Hanover House).
- Writes “The Rare Photograph,” *U. S. Camera*, 19 (November), p. 69.

- 1957: Plates 5 (April 17), 14 (April 18), 23, 26 (April 28).  
 Group exhibition *I Hear America Singing*, selected by Nancy Newhall and circulated in Europe and the Middle East by the United States Information Agency.  
 Exhibition *Madonnas and Marketplaces*, a collaboration with Ellen Auerbach intentionally displayed without identifying their individual contributions, the Limelight Gallery, New York, April 4–May 19; reviewed in *New York Times* (April 14), *Village Voice* (May 1).  
 Exhibition *Mexican Baroque Church Art* (also in collaboration with Auerbach), the Centerline General Store, Santa Fe, June 15–August 15.  
 Group exhibition *Volk aus vielen Völkern* ("A Nation of Many Nations"), selected by Nancy Newhall, with Ansel Adams and Herbert Bayer, for circulation in Germany by the United States Information Agency.
- 1958: Plate 20 (May 16).  
 Exhibition with Laura Gilpin of Santa Fe, the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, July.
- 1959: Plate 54 (July).  
 Group exhibition *Photography in the Fine Arts I*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May; juried by Alexander Liberman, James J. Rorimer, A. Hyatt Mayor, Beaumont Newhall, Edward Steichen, Grace M. Mayer, Bryan Holme, and others.  
 Exhibition of thirty-six prints, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, February 1–10.  
 Exhibition *The Seasons: A Photographic Essay*, the Centerline General Store, Santa Fe, August 1–September 8. Expanded version *The Seasons, Color Photographs by Eliot Porter Accompanied by Quotations from Henry David Thoreau*, organized by Nancy Newhall, the George Eastman House, Rochester, August 12–October 1, 1960; circulated by Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to twenty-two institutions, 1960–1964; ultimately the basis for book "*In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*." (See 1962.)  
 Group exhibition *Photography at Mid-Century*, the George Eastman House, Rochester, November 10–February 10, 1960; organized by Beaumont Newhall.  
 Represented in Alexander Klots and Elsie Klots, *Living Insects of the World* (New York: Doubleday and Co., and London: Hamish Hamilton); Tom Maloney, ed., *The Fifty Stars of the U.S.A., U. S. Camera 1960* (New York, 1959); Ivan T. Sanderson, *The Continent We Live On* (London: Hamish Hamilton).
- 1960: Plate 55 (Summer).  
 First expedition to Glen Canyon, Utah. (Return visits in 1961, 1962, 1965, 1968, 1971.)  
 Group exhibition *Photography in the Fine Arts II*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 20–September 4; juried by James J. Rorimer, A. Hyatt Mayor, Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., Hugh Edwards, Adelyn Breeskin, Una E. Johnson, Emily Genauer, Sam Hunter, Alexander Eliot, and others.  
 Group exhibition *The Sense of Abstraction in Contemporary Photography*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 16–April 10.  
 Fairfield Porter, "Eliot Porter," *The Nation*, 190 (January), pp. 39–40.  
 Publication of *This Is the American Earth* (based on 1955 exhibition), edited by Nancy Newhall and Ansel Adams (San Francisco: the Sierra Club).
- 1961: Plate 30 (August 29).  
 Group exhibition *Photography in the Fine Arts III*, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, June.
- 1962: Plate 46 (May 24).  
 Group exhibition *Photography U.S.A. National Invitational Exhibition*, DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, January 28–March 18.

Publication of *"In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World,"* from Henry David Thoreau, with selections from Thoreau, photographs by Porter, and an introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch (San Francisco: the Sierra Club); and subsequent editions. A portfolio by the same title containing ten facsimile reproductions and four text pages issued by the publisher. Reviewed in *Christian Science Monitor* (November 29), p. 4b; *Library Journal*, 87 (December 15), p. 4547; *Natural History*, 72 (May 1963), p. 7; *Aperture*, 11:2 (1964), pp. 82–83. A six-minute film by the same title directed by Wayne Waaddams (Boston: Film Associates, 1970).

1963: Plates 4 (September 30), 25 (August 21), 44, 48 (October).

Travel to Adirondack Park, New York. (Return visits Spring 1964; Winter, Spring, and Fall 1965.)

Retrospective exhibition of fifty-three prints at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, December 14–January 26, 1964.

Group exhibition *Photography in the Fine Arts IV*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 16–September 30.

Group exhibition *The Photographer and the American Landscape*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, September 24–November 28; selected by John Szarkowski.

Group exhibition *Spectrum*, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts, February 5–26; organized by Nathan Lyons; circulated to eight institutions.

Publication of *The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), edited with a foreword by David Brower; photographs and afterword by Porter. (Second revised edition in 1966.) Portfolio by the same title with ten facsimile reproductions and four text pages issued by the publisher.

1964: Plates 3 (July 7), 6 (March 31), 21 (August 25), 43 (March 9), 50 (May 23).

First expedition to Baja California, Mexico, in February–April. (Return visits in July–August 1966.)

Publication of *The Seasons: Portfolio I* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), containing twelve original dye-transfer prints and four text pages, edition of 105 (five *hors commerce*).

Patricia Caulfield, "Eliot Porter," *Modern Photography*, 28 (February), p. 52.

1965: Plates 27 (May 12), 38 (September 22), 51 (August 4).

Exhibition of fifty prints at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, March 27–April 25; reviewed in *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 4).

Group exhibition *Photography in America, 1850–1965*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, October 13–November 28; selected by Robert M. Doty.

"An Explanation," *The Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*, 39 (Spring), pp. 20–25, account by Porter of his change of career.

Represented in David Brower, ed., *Not Man Apart* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), with quotations from Robinson Jeffers and photographs by several San Francisco Bay area photographers.

1966: Plates 17 (May 21), 19 (July 28), 32 (March 10), 33 (July 31), 42 (November 21), 52 (May 4), 53 (August 12).

Travel to the Galápagos Islands, February–June.

Travel to Baja California, Mexico, July–August.

Exhibition *From the McAlpin Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 14–February 12, 1967; reviewed in *New York Times* (December 25).

Group exhibition *An Exhibition of Work by The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellows in Photography*, the Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, April 15–May 13.

Publication of *Forever Wild: The Adirondacks* (Blue Mountain Lake, New York: the Adirondack Museum, and New York: Harper & Row), photographs by Porter, captions by William Chapman White.

Publication of *Summer Island: Penobscot Country* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), edited by David Brower, photographs by Porter. (Abridged edition in 1968.) Reviewed in *Christian Science Monitor* (December 1), p. 46;



- National Review*, 18 (April 5), p. 321; *New York Times Book Review* (December 4), p. 3; *Saturday Review of Literature*, 49 (December 3), p. 37.
- Cited in Patricia Caulfield, "Return to the Classic Scenic," *Modern Photography*, 30 (October), p. 54.
- 1967: Plates 7 (October 15), 13 (October 7), 28 (September 13), 29 (June 22).
- Travel to Greece and Turkey. (Return visits in 1970 and 1971.)
- Group exhibition *Photography U. S. A. '67*, DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, December 10–January 28, 1968.
- Publication of *Baja California and the Geography of Hope* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), edited by Kenneth Brower, text by Joseph Wood Krutch; essay, "Wild Peninsula," and photographs by Porter.
- 1968: Plates 16 (April 17), 49 (April 17).
- Group exhibition *Selections From the Dorothy Norman Collection*, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, May 24–September 1.
- Exhibition of forty prints, the Sierra Club Gallery, New York, June 26–August 30.
- Travel to Red River Gorge, Kentucky, on assignment for *Audubon Magazine*; photographs published in *Audubon*, 70 (September), pp. 58–70.
- Publication of *Galápagos: The Flow of Wildness* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club); Vol. I: *Discovery*; preface by C. B. Jijón, foreword by David Brower, introduction by Loren Eiseley, photographs by Porter. Vol. II: *Prospects*; introduction by J. P. Milton, foreword by Kenneth Brower, text by Kenneth Brower and Porter, photographs by Porter. (Abridged edition in 1969.) Reviewed in *Scientific American*, 220 (February), p. 130; *Saturday Review*, 51 (November 30), p. 54; *Time*, 92 (November 29), p. 102; *Times Literary Supplement* (December 19), p. 1441.
- 1969: Receives honorary doctor of fine arts degree, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.
- Exhibition *Photographs by Eliot Porter, Paintings by Fairfield Porter*, Colby College, Waterville, Maine, May–June; catalogue essay by James M. Carpenter.
- Exhibition *Thirty-Five Unpublished Pictures of Baja California and The Galápagos Islands*, the Focus Gallery, San Francisco, January 7–February 1.
- Publication of *Down the Colorado: Diary of The First Trip Through the Grand Canyon, 1869* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.), from the diary of John Wesley Powell, with photographs and epilogue by Porter; excerpted in *American Heritage*, 20 (October), pp. 52–60; *Audubon*, 71 (November), pp. 64–76.
- Ansel Adams, "Eliot Porter, Master of Nature's Color," *Modern Photography*, 33 (October), pp. 92–97.
- Beaumont Newhall and Nancy Newhall, "A Collection of Photographs," *Aperture*, 14 (Fall), with biography of Porter and bibliography of his writings.
- 1970: Plate 41 (October 1).
- Travel to Africa, February–November.
- Exhibition of fifty-six prints, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico, January 4–30.
- Exhibition of fifty-seven prints, Phoenix College, Phoenix, February 7–March 7.
- Exhibition of seventy-five prints at the Museum of Fine Arts, Saint Petersburg, Florida, March 15–April 15.
- Publication of *Appalachian Wilderness: The Great Smoky Mountains* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.), photographs by Porter, text by Edward Abbey, epilogue by Harry M. Caudill. (Second edition in 1975.) Reviewed in *Life*, 69 (December 18), p. 12; *New Republic*, 164 (February 20), p. 29; *New York Times Book Review* (December 6), p. 70.
- Writes "To Conserve Our Natural Heritage for the Good of Mankind," *The Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*, 44 (March–April), pp. 6–12.

- 1971: Plate 47 (August 14).  
Exhibition, the Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, February 3–February 28; selected by Peter C. Bunnell.  
Exhibition of thirty prints at Neikrug Galleries, New York, September 30–October 24; reviewed in *New York Times* (October 17), *Village Voice* (October 21).  
Exhibition *Eliot Porter Photographs of Classical Greece and Asia Minor. Aline Porter Paintings*, St. John's College, Santa Fe, December 4–19; checklist with note by Porter.  
Margaret Weiss, "Eliot Porter: Conservationist with a Camera," *Saturday Review*, 54 (October 2), pp. 58–59.
- 1972: Plates 31 (August 31), 36 (August 11), 40 (July 10).  
Travel to Iceland.  
Exhibition, Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, February 25–March 12; selected by Charles Steinhacker.  
Exhibition, the 831 Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan, September 5–October 15.  
Publication of *Birds of North America: A Personal Selection* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.); reviewed in *Saturday Review*, 55 (December 2), p. 84.  
Publication of *The Tree Where Man Was Born: The African Experience* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.), text by Peter Matthiessen, photographs by Porter; reviewed in *New York Review of Books*, 19 (January 25), p. 19; *Natural History*, 81 (December), p. 92; *Newsweek*, 80 (October 30), p. 103; *Saturday Review*, 55 (October 30), p. 78; *Saturday Review of the Arts*, 55 (December 2), p. 84; *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Spring, 1973), p. xciii; *Atlantic* (November), p. 125.  
Publication of *Iceland* (San Francisco: the Sierra Club), portfolio of twelve original dye-transfer prints and text by Porter, edition of 110 (ten hors commerce).
- 1973: Plates 8 (August 1), 10 (August 26), 35 (May 1).  
Travel to Egypt, Spring and Fall, to photograph antiquities for E. P. Dutton & Co.  
Exhibition, *The Eliot Porter Retrospective*, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, March 20–April 15; 190 color and fifty black and white prints, selected by Beaumont Newhall in collaboration with B. G. Burr, Henry Hunt, and Paula Quirk. Catalogue foreword by Newhall with note by Porter. Circulated by University of New Mexico, 1973–1975, and by Western Association of Art Museums Traveling Exhibition Service, 1976–1978. Reviewed in *Artweek*, 5 (May 25, 1974), p. 71.  
Group exhibition *Landscape/Cityscape*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 13–January 6, 1974; selected by Phyllis D. Massar; checklist by the same title.  
Publication of *Der Baum der Schöpfung; Erlebnis Ostafrika* (Zürich: Fritz Molden).  
Publication of *Portraits from Nature* (New York: E. P. Dutton), portfolio of eight color offset reproductions.  
Interview with Porter, "Reflections in Nature: How to Capture Light and Color in Wilderness Photography," *Backpacker*, 1 (Summer), pp. 52–55, 93, 95, 96.
- 1974: Plate 9 (July 27).  
Expedition to Antarctica, December–March 1975. (Return visit December 1976–March 1977.)  
Group exhibition *Photography in America*, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 20–January 12, 1975; selected by Robert M. Doty. Publication of book by the same title based on the exhibition (New York: Random House, Inc., and The Ridge Press, Inc.).
- 1975: Plate 18 (June 20).  
Exhibition, the Afterimage Gallery, Dallas, Texas.

- Exhibition of forty-one prints at the Silver Image Gallery, Tacoma, Washington, February 4–March 2.
- Exhibition, the Marcus-Krakow-Rosen-Sonnabend Gallery, Boston, May.
- Group exhibition *Color Photography Now*, the Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, September 29–October 27; catalogue by the same title, with essay by Eugenia Parry Janis. Reviewed in *Boston Globe* (October 5).
- Group exhibition *The Land: Twentieth-Century Landscape Photographs*, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, November 12–February 15, 1976; selected with an introduction by Bill Brandt; circulated to five art museums in Great Britain.
- Exhibition *Maine Photographs*, the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, December 16–March 7, 1976; thirty-nine prints.
- 1976: Exhibition *Antarctica*, forty-five prints, with paintings by Daniel Lang; circulated to eighteen locations by Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, January 1976–February 1979.
- Group exhibition *Aspects of American Photography 1976* at the University of Missouri art gallery, St. Louis, April 1–30. Selection and catalogue by Jean S. Tucker.
- Represented in Julia Scully, Andy Grundberg, and Mary O'Grady, "One Hundred Years of Color," *Modern Photography*, 40 (December), pp. 96–120.
- "Eliot Porter," *Current Biography*, 37 (November), pp. 20–23.
- 1977: Plate 37 (June 9).
- Exhibition of fifty prints, the Cronin Gallery, Houston, Texas, May 24–June 18.
- Group exhibition *The Great West: Real/Ideal*, University of Colorado, Boulder, September 10–October 15. Selection and catalogue by Sandy Hume, Ellen Manchester, and Gary Metz.
- Publication of *Moments of Discovery: Adventures with American Birds* (New York: E. P. Dutton). Color photographs by Porter, text by Michael Harwood and Porter. Reviewed in *Saturday Review*, 5 (November 26), p. 32; *New York Times Book Review* (January 15, 1978), p. 23; *Virginia Quarterly Review* 57 (Winter 1978), p. 30.
- Interview with Patricia Caulfield, "Eliot Porter on 35-mm.," *Popular Photography*, 81 (September), p. 108.
- 1978: Group exhibition *The Collection of Alfred Stieglitz: Fifty Pioneers of Modern Photography*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 18–July 16; selected by Weston J. Naef; catalogue by the same title (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Viking Press).
- Group exhibition *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 28–October 2. Selection and catalogue by John Szarkowski.
- Exhibition *Mexican Church Interiors: Color Dye-transfers by Eliot Porter and Ellen Auerbach*, Sander Gallery, Washington, D.C., September 30–October 28.
- Publication of *Antarctica* (New York: E. P. Dutton), color photographs and text by Porter, with foreword by Walter Sullivan; reviewed in *Newsweek*, 92 (December 11), p. 95; *Saturday Review*, 5 (November 25), p. 38.
- Publication of *Seal Song* (New York: Viking Press), text by Brian Davies, color photographs by Porter.
- 1979: Exhibition of fifty-four prints, the Halstead 831 Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan, January 9–February 10.
- Group exhibition *The History of Photography in New Mexico*, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, April 1–July 29; selected by Van Deren Coke, catalogue introduction by Beaumont Newhall.
- Publication of *Birds in Flight* (Santa Fe and New York: Bell Editions), portfolio of eight original dye-transfer photographs and text by Porter, edition of twenty (*six hors commerce*).
- Interview with Porter in Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), pp. 237–252.
- 1979–1980: Exhibition *Intimate Landscapes*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 14–January 20.

# List of Plates

- [1] *Foxtail grass. Lake City, Colorado. August 1957*
- [2] *Maple leaves and pine needles. Tamworth, New Hampshire. October 3, 1956*
- [3] *Raspberry leaves and grass. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. July 7, 1964*
- [4] *Blackberry bushes. Adirondack Park, New York. September 30, 1963*
- [5] *Red-spined cactus and lichen-covered branches. Near El Aguajito, Baja California. March 31, 1964*
- [6] *Dogwood berries off Foothills Parkway. Near Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. October 15, 1967*
- [7] *Long-stemmed grasses. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. August 1, 1973*
- [8] *Columbine leaves. Great Spruce Head Island, Maine. July 27, 1974*
- [9] *Asters and raspberries. Oak Island, Maine. August 26, 1973*
- [10] *Hepaticas. Near Sheffield, Massachusetts. April 17, 1957*
- [11] *Aspen, yellow leaves, and asters. Sangre de Cristo Mountains, New Mexico. September 20, 1950*
- [12] *Trunks of maple and birch with oak leaves. Passaconaway Road, New Hampshire. October 7, 1956*
- [13] *Red tree. Near Cade's Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. October 7, 1967*
- [14] *Red osier. Near Great Barrington, Massachusetts. April 18, 1957*
- [15] *Trees and pond. Near Sherborn, Massachusetts. April 1957*
- [16] *Redbud trees in bottomland. Near Red River Gorge, Kentucky. April 17, 1968*
- [17] *Lichens on palo santo tree. Barrington Island, Galápagos Islands. May 21, 1966*
- [18] *Rock spires and spruce trees. Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah. June 20, 1975*
- [19] *Elephant tree in bloom. Near El Mármol, Baja California. July 28, 1966*
- [20] *Trunks of the paloverde tree. Tucson Mountain Park, Arizona. May 16, 1958*
- [21] *Davis Gulch. Escalante River near Glen Canyon, Utah. August 25, 1964*
- [22] *Pool in a brook. Pond Brook, near Whiteface, New Hampshire. October 1953*
- [23] *Shadbush. Near Hillsborough, New Hampshire. April 28, 1957*
- [24] *Pond with marsh grass and lily pads. Madison, New Hampshire. October 1, 1952*
- [25] *Dead tree and pool. Waterpocket Fold, Glen Canyon, Utah. August 21, 1963*
- [26] *Willows in slough. Near Hillsborough, New Hampshire. April 28, 1957*
- [27] *Waterfall. Davis Gulch, Escalante River near Glen Canyon, Utah. May 12, 1965*
- [28] *Edge of the Colorado River at mile 16. Above House Rock Canyon, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. September 13, 1967*
- [29] *Edge of the Colorado River at mile 122. Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. June 22, 1967*
- [30] *Dungeon Canyon. Near Glen Canyon, Utah. August 29, 1961*
- [31] *Formation of basalt. Sugarloaf, Barred Islands, Maine. August 31, 1972*
- [32] *Lava and volcanic ash debris. Sullivan Bay, Galápagos Islands. March 10, 1966*
- [33] *Cirio tree. Near Las Tres Vírgenes Volcano, near Mezquital, Baja California. July 31, 1966*
- [34] *Taos River canyon. Near Taos, New Mexico. October 16, 1962*
- [35] *Upheaval Dome. Canyonlands National Park, Utah. May 1, 1973*
- [36] *Waterfall. Hagavatn, Iceland. August 11, 1972*



- [37] *Stones and cracked mud. Black Place, New Mexico. June 9, 1977*
- [38] *Moist rock wall. Cathedral of the Desert, Clearcreek, Utah. September 22, 1965*
- [39] *Roots of the strangler fig tree. Everglades National Park, Florida. March 7, 1954*
- [40] *Pyroclastic lavas. Hitardalur, Snaefellsnes Sýsla, Iceland. July 10, 1972*
- [41] *Desert roses. Tsavo West, Kenya. October 1, 1970*
- [42] *Frostbitten apples. Tesuque, New Mexico. November 21, 1966*
- [43] *Lichen-covered boulder. Between San Javier and Comondú, Baja California. March 9, 1964*
- [44] *Blueberry bushes. Near Keene Valley, Adirondack Park, New York. October 1963*
- [45] *Colorful trees. Newfound Gap Road, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee. October 1967*
- [46] *River edge at sunset. Below Piute Rapids, San Juan River, Colorado. May 24, 1962*
- [47] *Rock-eroded stream bed. Coyote Gulch, Utah. August 14, 1971*
- [48] *Puffer Pond Brook. Warren County, Adirondack Park, New York. May 23, 1964*
- [49] *Boulder arrangements. Red River Gorge, Kentucky. April 17, 1968*
- [50] *Near Mason Pond. Hamilton County, Adirondack Park, New York. May 23, 1964*
- [51] *Tidal marsh. Mount Desert Island, Maine. August 4, 1965*
- [52] *Into the clouds from the rim. Alcedo Volcano, Galápagos Islands. May 4, 1966*
- [53] *Sunset behind Las Tres Vírgenes Volcano. Near Mezquital, Baja California. August 12, 1966*
- [54] *Clouds at sunset. Tesuque, New Mexico. July 1959*
- [55] *Clouds at sunset. Tesuque, New Mexico. Summer 1960*

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